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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/602,505	06/24/2003	Brian G. Rowell	P-77731-06(UT)	2168

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EXAMINER

ABDELNOUR, DENNIS J

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3681

DATE MAILED: 06/30/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/602,505

Applicant(s)

ROWELL, BRIAN G.

Examiner

Dennis J. Abdelnour

Art Unit

3681

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 June 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 24 June 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

The following is a first action on the merits of application serial 10/602,505 filed on June 24, 2003. Claims 1-15 are pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 3, 7, and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The limitation “providing at least a 30% increase in bearing contact surface in comparison to an original equipment thrust bearing” renders the claim indefinite because the bearing contact surface for an original equipment thrust bearing has not been defined, and therefore a specified increase in thrust bearing surface cannot be ascertained.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

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4. Claims 1, 4-5, 8, and 11-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Briggs (USPN 6,675,453).

Briggs discloses an improved planetary gear carrier assembly for an automatic transmission of a land vehicle in Figure 10, and a method for manufacturing an improved planetary gear carrier assembly, the carrier assembly and method comprising:

a carrier housing including a first mating section (128) including a central access opening (250) having an inside diameter of a predetermined dimension; the first mating section (128) also including at least one semicircular cutout (125) formed coextensively with an inner surface of the access opening;

a second mating section (120);

a set of planetary gears (114) rotatably mounted in coplanar relation within the carrier housing and intermediate the first and second mating sections; and

a replacement thrust bearing (182) residing at a location within the carrier housing accessible only through the access opening.

The replacement thrust bearing (182) is piloted by a counterbore formed within an interior surface of the second mating section of the carrier housing (see Figure 10).

New lubricating passages 174, 176, and 178 are provided to carry lubricating fluid to the appropriate locations, including to the axial bearing 182.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 2-3, 6-7, and 9-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Briggs.

Briggs has been described above. Briggs does not show the thrust bearing having at least fifty-two roller elements, the roller elements measuring at least 0.157 inches or providing at least a 30% increase in bearing contact surface in comparison to an original equipment thrust bearing. The Briggs reference does not specify these parameters, which would, however, be a matter of design choice.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Briggs by including at least fifty-two roller elements measuring at least 0.157 inches as a matter of design choice.

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

The following references illustrate repairing/converting techniques in automatic planetary transmissions: USPN 4,617,711 to McMinn and USPN 3,747,196 to Whittington.

The following references show planetary carrier assemblies and assembling methods: USPN 5,658,215 (see esp. Figure 2) to Premiski et al., USPN 5,545,104 to Tilley, and USPN 3,842,481 to Laing.

USPN 4,968,157 illustrates a thrust bearing assembly mounted in a planetary gear device.

Facsimile Transmission

8. Submission of your response by facsimile transmission is encouraged. Group 3600's facsimile number is **(703) 872-9326**. Recognizing the fact that reducing cycle time in the processing and examination of patent applications will effectively increase a patent's term, it is to your benefit to submit responses by facsimile transmission whenever permissible. Such submission will place the response directly in our examining group's hands and will eliminate Post Office processing and delivery time as well as the PTO's mailroom processing and delivery time. For a complete list of correspondence not permitted by facsimile transmission, see MPEP 502.01. In general, most responses and/or amendments not requiring a fee, as well as those requiring a fee but charging such fee to a deposit account, can be submitted by facsimile transmission. Responses requiring a fee which applicant is paying by check should not be submitting by facsimile transmission separately from the check.

Responses submitted by facsimile transmission should include a Certificate of Transmission (MPEP 512). The following is an example of the format the certification might take:

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to
the Patent and Trademark Office (Fax No. (703) 305-3597) on _____

(Date)

Typed or printed name of person signing this certificate:

(Signature)

If your response is submitted by facsimile transmission, you are hereby reminded that the original should be retained as evidence of authenticity (37 CFR 1.4 and MPEP 502.02). Please do not separately mail the original or another copy unless required by the Patent and Trademark Office. Submission of the original response or a follow-up copy of the response after your response has been transmitted by facsimile will only cause further unnecessary delays in the processing of your application; duplicate responses where fees are charged to a deposit account may result in those fees being charged twice.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dennis J. Abdelnour whose telephone number is (703) 305-5309.

The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:00-5:30, alternate Fridays off.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Charles A. Marmor can be reached on (703) 308-0830. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

dja
AA

June 24, 2004

Charles A. Marmor 6/24/04
CHARLES A. MARMOR
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
ART UNIT 3681